

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

In response to the Office Action, Applicant has amended independent claim 15 to more-particularly claim the structure of the product that results from the powder metallurgical injection molding process. Thus, Applicant respectfully submits that even if claim 15 can be considered to be a product-by-process claim, the product made by the process in this claim, i.e., the honeycomb seal, has now been more-particularly claimed. Further, with respect to the other pending independent claim in this application, i.e., claim 20, Applicant has also more-particularly claimed the structure of the honeycomb seal. As will be further discussed below, Applicant respectfully submits that McGinnis does not disclose Applicant's now more-particularly claimed structure for the honeycomb seal where the base element and honeycomb elements are an integrally molded structure.

In Applicant's invention, as claimed, the base element and honeycomb elements are an integrally molded structure. The powder metallurgical injection molding process results in a product with this structure. Applicant respectfully submit that McGinnis discloses no such structure. In McGinnis, any base portion 7 and honeycomb cells 9 are not an integrally molded structure. As can be seen in Figure 1 of McGinnis, in the cross-sectional view, the different hatching for these different structural elements indicates that the base portion 7 and the honeycomb cells 9 are not an integrally molded structure. Applicant respectfully submits that even if the Examiner can interpret McGinnis in the broadest possible sense as disclosing honeycomb elements that are embodied as a single piece with the base element, as previously claimed in independent claim 20, that McGinnis does not disclose the now even more-particularly claimed structure for the honeycomb seal where the base element and honeycomb elements are an integrally molded structure. Applicant respectfully submits that McGinnis discloses no more than what Applicant discusses in the Background and Summary of the Invention section of Applicant's specification in para. 0005

where the honeycomb elements and body are separate components connected to each other.

Further with respect to McGinnis, the special feature of the honeycomb seal is carried out by the grooves (passages) 11 at the – usually closed – ends of the honeycomb cells 9 and in the base portion 7 for draining water resulting from condensing steam away from the cells 9. The grooves will only be machined into the base portion 7 before the cells 9 are connected to the base portion. Thus, the base portion and honeycomb cells of McGinnis are connected to each other and are not an integrally molded structure.

Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that McGinnis provides no disclosure for Applicant's now more-particularly claimed structure for the honeycomb seal where the base element and honeycomb elements are an integrally molded structure and that it would not have been obvious to provide such a structure in McGinnis based on the disclosed structure in McGinnis.

Applicant has also added new dependent claims 41-46 to more-particularly claim the structure of the guide section on the base element. Applicant respectfully submits that claims 41-42 are drawn to the embodiment of Figure 1 as further disclosed in Applicant's specification at least at para. 0018, claims 43-44 are drawn to the embodiment of Figure 2 as further disclosed in Applicant's specification at least at para. 0019, and claims 45-46 are drawn to the embodiment of Figure 3 as further disclosed in Applicant's specification at least at para. 0022. Applicant respectfully submits that even if the Examiner can consider that McGinnis discloses a guide section, comprised by the sections of element 7 overlapped by element 5 (the blade ring) as when rejecting dependent claims 19 and 22 in the Office Action, that McGinnis does not disclose the more-particularly claimed structure for the guide section as now claimed in dependent claims 41-46.

Further in this Amendment, Applicant has additionally amended independent claims 15 and 20 to delete the phrase "in particular" and has amended dependent claims 28 and 29 to more-particularly claim the combination

of the rotor, stator, and honeycomb seal. Applicant respectfully submits that the Examiner's rejections and objections to these claims have now been overcome. Lastly in this Amendment, Applicant has cancelled withdrawn claims 32-40.

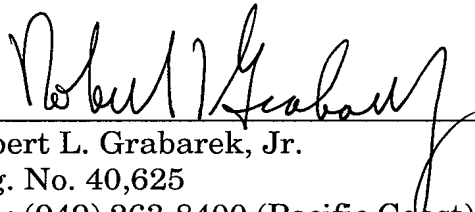
Applicant respectfully submits that the application is now in condition for allowance. If there are any questions regarding this Amendment or the application in general, a telephone call to the undersigned would be appreciated since this should expedite the prosecution of the application for all concerned.

As provided for above, this paper should be considered as a Petition for an Extension of Time sufficient to effect a timely response. Please charge any deficiency in fees, or credit any overpayment of fees, to Deposit Account No. 05-1323 (Docket No. 011235.56348US).

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: November 15, 2007

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